(a) whether it is a fact that India has signed its largest ever defence deal with the US for a whopping. $ 2.2 billion to fill a crucial gap in its maritime reconnaissance capability;

(b) if so, whether it has been decided not to accept any restrictions on the use of equipment purchases from foreign nations;

(c) the main features of the deal; and

(d) to what extent it has been helpful to Naval Force?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) A proposal for acquisition of maritime reconnaissance aircraft is currently under consideration. Aircraft proposed to be acquired would be helpful to the Navy in meeting their requirement for long range maritime surveillance.

Cost escalation of aircraft-carrier

505. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Russian Government has proposed a price escalation of a staggering $ 1.2 billion for re-equipping aircraft carrier;

(b) if so, whether technical evaluation and negotiations in this regard are underway;

(c) whether the revision in time and cost for repairing the aircraft carriers due to growth of work the price escalation proposal by Russian side in $ 1,202 million;

(d) whether any final decision in this regard has been taken and whether any final deal has been finalized; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) to (e) The Russian side has submitted a revised Master Schedule indicating a delay and an increase in price for repair and re-equipping of ex-Admiral Gorshkov aircraft carrier. The price escalation proposed by the Russian side towards repair and re-equipping, spares and training, etc., is USD 1202 million. Only technical evaluation is underway and no cost negotiations have been initiated in this regard.

Status of WTO negotiations on agriculture

506. SHRI S. ANBALAGAN:
SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT:
Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the present status of World Trade Organisation (WTO) negotiations; and

(b) the steps being taken and proposed to be taken by Government to safeguard interests of low income and poor resource farmers of the country from the adverse decisions of WTO?